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Information Bulletin

*Grade 6 English Language Arts
1997-98*

This document was written primarily for:

Students	✓
Teachers	✓ Grade 6 Teachers
Administrators	✓
Parents	
General Audience	
Others	✓ Superintendents

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This bulletin contains general information about the Achievement Testing Program and information specific to the Grade 6 English Language Arts Achievement Test. **It replaces all previous bulletins.**

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September 1997

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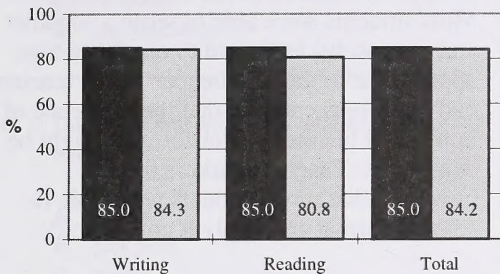
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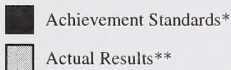
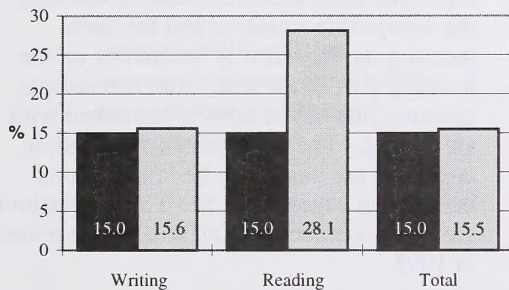
Looking Back: Highlights of 1997

This information provides teachers, school administrators, and the public with an overview of the results for the June 1997 Grade 6 English Language Arts provincial assessment. It complements the detailed school and jurisdiction reports.

Acceptable Standard



Standard of Excellence



*the percentage of students in the province expected to meet the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence

**the percentage of students in the province who met the standards (based on those who wrote)

Who Wrote the Test?

All students registered in Grade 6 were expected to write the 1997 English Language Arts Achievement Test. A total of 41 036 students completed the June 1997 assessment. This number reflects an increase of approximately 561 students over last year's administration of the test. In 1997, only a small proportion of students in Grade 6 did not write the test: 1.3% of students were absent, 2.7% of students were excused from writing by their superintendent, and an additional 1.7% of students wrote only one part of the test.

What Was the Test Like?

The test had two parts—*Part A: Writing* and *Part B: Reading*

Section I of the *Part A: Writing* assignment consisted of a picture and a prompt that students responded to in the form of a story.

This writing was scored in five reporting categories: Content, Organization, Sentence Structure, Vocabulary, and Conventions. Content and Organization were weighted to be worth twice as much as each of the other categories.

Section II of the *Part A: Writing* assignment required students to write a business letter.

This writing was scored in two reporting categories: Content and Content Management. These categories were weighted equally.

Part B: Reading consisted of 50 multiple-choice questions based on reading selections that were either informational or narrative/poetic in nature.

How Well Did Students Do?

As shown in the graphs on page one, on the Writing part of the test slightly fewer students than expected met the *acceptable standard* and slightly more than expected met the *standard of excellence*. On the Reading part of the test, not as many students as expected met the *acceptable standard*, and 13.1% more students than expected met the *standard of excellence*. For the total test, slightly fewer students than expected met the *acceptable standard* and slightly more than expected met the *standard of excellence*.

In 10.9% of the schools, the percentage of students meeting the *acceptable standard* for the total test was significantly above expectations for the province. In 69.3% of the schools, the percentage of students meeting the *acceptable standard* was not significantly different from provincial expectations. In 19.8% of schools, the percentage of students meeting the *acceptable standard* was significantly below provincial expectations. Schools where fewer than five students wrote the Grade 6 tests are not included in these school calculations.

For detailed provincial results, refer to your school reports.

Has Achievement Changed Since Last Year?

This year, the percentage of students meeting the *acceptable standard* and the percentage of students meeting the *standard of excellence* for the Reading part of the test were higher than last year.

The percentage of students meeting the *acceptable standard* for the Writing part of the test was the same as last year, and the percentage of students meeting the *standard of excellence* was slightly higher than last year.

Commentary and Sample Questions from the Grade 6 English Language Arts Achievement Test 1997

This is the second year that two pieces of writing, a narrative and a business letter, have been required on the achievement test. Most students were able to write a succinct and purposeful letter and to employ a tone appropriate to their audience. Some teachers had expressed concern that the existence of a number of business letter formats might be confusing. Teacher markers found, however, that most students were able to select a format and apply it consistently.

The following is a discussion of specific areas of strength and weakness for students on the reading part of the test. Sample questions from the test are provided to highlight these areas for students meeting the *acceptable standard* and for those meeting the *standard of excellence* on the Reading part of the test. For each sample question, the keyed answer is marked with an asterisk. The passages on which these questions are based can be found in this bulletin on pages 28 to 37. These questions are no longer secured and will not be reused in 1998.

Acceptable Standard

6. “Jee-en-dzuh” appears in brackets after the word chien-tze to show its
- A. word origin
 - B. alternate spelling
 - C. meaning
 - *D. pronunciation
-

45. The seeds that sprout first after a forest fire are from a
- A. maple
 - *B. jack pine
 - C. poplar
 - D. white birch
-

47. The **main** idea of this article is that seeds
- A. germinate in different ways
 - *B. have special adaptive characteristics
 - C. can be dormant for many years
 - D. provide for many birds

For **question 6**, students had to use text features to assist their comprehension of the article. Of the students who met the *acceptable standard* but not the *standard of excellence*, 77% were able to do this.

For **question 45**, students had to locate key details in the article. Of the students who met the *acceptable standard* but not the *standard of excellence*, 82% were able to do this.

For **question 47**, students had to draw a conclusion by synthesizing information. Of the students who met the *acceptable standard* but not the *standard of excellence*, only 44% answered this question correctly.

The strengths of students who met the *acceptable standard* include the ability to

- locate and understand key details
- understand the elements of story structure
- use text and typographical features to assist their reading
- draw conclusions by synthesizing explicit information in straightforward passages

Many of these students did not do as well as expected in

- inferring implicit relationships among events and ideas
- inferring the meaning of words and phrases from their context
- synthesizing information from complex passages

Standard of Excellence

22. According to the description in lines 5 and 6, Tyler was travelling
- A. west
 - B. east
 - C. south
 - *D. north
-

For **question 22**, students had to draw a conclusion by using prior knowledge and by synthesizing information in the passage. Of the students who met the *standard of excellence*, 71% answered this question correctly. Only 44% of students who met the *acceptable standard* but not the *standard of excellence* answered this question correctly.

43. Seeds that are "dormant" (line 15) are those that are
- A. used in cooking
 - B. not formed in pods
 - C. sprouting new shoots
 - *D. not yet growing

For **question 43**, students had to infer the meaning of a word from its context in the article. Of the students who met the *standard of excellence*, 90% answered this question correctly.

Students who met the standard of excellence had very few difficulties with this assessment. In addition to demonstrating the strengths just mentioned, these students were able to

- synthesize information from a wide range of selections to make inferences, judgements, and conclusions
 - recognize the meaning of words and phrases from the context of the material
 - understand the author's point of view
-

Reporting the Results

On August 22, 1997, each school jurisdiction received, electronically, a district report and individual school reports regarding their students' achievement, as well as guidelines for interpreting these results in relation to provincial standards.

To facilitate reflection on school programs, we expect that results will be shared with all school staff (not just teachers of grades 3, 6, and 9), as well as with parents and the community.

Two copies of an individual profile for each student were sent to the school that the student will attend in September. We expect that the Parent Copy will be given to parents and the School Copy will remain with the student's record.

The following achievement tests are secured:
Grade 6 Mathematics, 1995
ALL tests from 1996 and 1997

Looking Ahead: What is Upcoming for 1998

General Information

Purpose

The purpose of the Achievement Testing Program is to

- determine if students are learning what they are expected to learn
- report to Albertans how well students have achieved provincial standards at given points in their schooling
- assist schools, jurisdictions, and the province in monitoring and improving student learning

Enhance Student Learning

Careful examination and interpretation of the results can help identify areas of relative strength and weakness in student achievement. Teachers and administrators can use this information in planning and delivering relevant and effective instruction in relation to broad, general learnings in the *Program of Studies*.

Enable Accountability

Alberta Education and school jurisdiction personnel are responsible for ensuring that the highest quality education is provided to all students in the province.

Information about achievement is provided to

- schools and jurisdictions
- parents
- the public

so that they may know how well students in their schools are meeting local targets and provincial expectations.

Interpreting Results

Achievement tests assess only part of what is to be learned. In addition, many factors contribute to student achievement. Personnel at the jurisdiction and school levels are in the best position to appropriately interpret, use, and communicate jurisdiction and school results in the local context.

The Achievement Testing Program provides teachers, parents, students, school administrators, Alberta Education, and the public with information about what students know and can do in relation to provincial standards. Group results are reported at school, district, and provincial levels to improve learning opportunities for students.

The assessments are administered in two subject areas at Grade 3—language arts and mathematics—and in four subject areas at grades 6 and 9—language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science.

The assessments are based on provincial standards, which reflect important learnings in the subject areas listed above. Classroom teachers from across the province are extensively involved in developing and field testing the assessment instruments.

Administering the Tests

Information about the nature of the provincial assessments as well as their administration to special needs students can be found in the *General Information Bulletin, Achievement Testing Program*, which is mailed each fall to all superintendents and principals.

Schedule

The schedule for administering achievement tests in the 1997–98 school year is mandated.

January 1998

The January achievement Tests for Grade 9 schools on a semester system must be administered according to the following schedule

Wednesday, January 21	9:00 to 11:30 A.M.	Grade 9 English Language Arts Part A
Thursday, January 22	9:00 to 10:45 A.M.	Grade 9 Science
Friday, January 23	9:00 to 11:30 A.M.	Grade 9 Français/French Language Arts Partie A
Monday, January 26	9:00 to 10:45 A.M.	Grade 9 English Language Arts Part B
Tuesday, January 27	9:00 to 10:45 A.M.	Grade 9 Mathematics
Wednesday, January 28	9:00 to 10:45 A.M.	Grade 9 Social Studies
Thursday, January 29	9:00 to 10:45 A.M.	Grade 9 Français/French Language Arts Partie B

May 1998

The written component of the language arts achievement tests for grades 3, 6, and 9 must be administered according to the following schedule:

Tuesday, May 26	9:00 to 10:30 A.M.	Grade 3 English Language Arts Part A
	9:00 to 11:30 A.M.	Grades 6 and 9 English Language Arts Part A
Thursday, May 28	9:00 to 11:30 A.M.	Grades 6 and 9 Français/French Language Arts Partie A

June 1998

The machine-scorable component of achievement tests for grades 3, 6, and 9 must be administered according to the following schedule:

Monday, June 15	9:00 to 10:30 A.M.	Grade 3 English Language Arts Part B
	9:00 to 10:30 A.M.	Grade 6 English Language Arts Part B
Wednesday, June 17	9:00 to 10:30 A.M.	Grade 3 Mathematics
	9:00 to 10:30 A.M.	Grade 6 Mathematics
Thursday, June 18	9:00 to 10:30 A.M.	Grade 6 Social Studies
	9:00 to 10:45 A.M.	Grade 9 Français/French Language Arts Partie B
Friday, June 19	9:00 to 10:45 A.M.	Grade 9 Science
Monday, June 22	9:00 to 10:30 A.M.	Grade 6 Science
	9:00 to 10:45 A.M.	Grade 9 English Language Arts Part B
Tuesday, June 23	9:00 to 10:30 A.M.	Grade 6 Français/French Language Arts Partie B
	9:00 to 10:45 A.M.	Grade 9 Mathematics
Wednesday, June 24	9:00 to 10:45 A.M.	Grade 9 Social Studies

The tests that will be administered each year are:

Grade 3

English Language Arts (*Part A: Writing*
and *Part B: Reading*)
Mathematics (English and French forms)

Grade 6

English Language Arts (*Part A: Writing*
and *Part B: Reading*)
Français/French Language Arts (*Partie A:*
Production écrite and *Partie B: Lecture*)
Mathematics (English and French forms)
Science (English and French forms)
Social Studies (English and French forms)

Grade 9

English Language Arts (*Part A: Writing*
and *Part B: Reading*)
Français/French Language Arts (*Partie A:*
Production écrite and *Partie B: Lecture*)
Mathematics (English and French forms)
Science (English and French forms)
Social Studies (English and French forms)

Students in French Programs

All students in French programs must write English Language Arts, French Language Arts, and French versions of other achievement tests if their language of instruction is French. Alberta Education will send a checklist to schools in January requesting an indication of how many English or French tests are required. These forms must be returned through jurisdiction offices by mid-February.

Marking Achievement Tests Locally

Teachers are able to mark the tests before returning them to Alberta Education. Teachers can use the results as part of an individual student's year end assessment, as well as for planning instruction.

Standards: Curriculum, Assessment, Achievement

The move toward results-based curricula has re-emphasized the need for a clear delineation of standards and their purpose. All standards and all methods of setting standards require judgement. Local targets are also described in this section.

The process of setting a standard can only be as good as the judgements that go into it. The standard will depend on whose judgements are involved in the process. In this sense, all standards are subjective. Yet once a standard has been set, the decisions based on it can be made objectively. Instead of a separate set of judgements for each test-taker, you will have the same set of judgements applied to all test-takers. Standards cannot be objectively determined, but they can be objectively applied.¹

Definitions

The Achievement Testing Program is directly concerned with three different but related standards. These provincial standards are curriculum standards, assessment standards, and achievement standards. Local targets are also described in this section.

- **Curriculum Standards** are the expected student learnings sequenced into grade levels. They include broad statements of knowledge, skills, and attitude expectations against which student performance is judged. These standards are established in the process of curriculum development and are found in the *Program of Studies* document produced for each subject.

¹ Passing Scores; Samuel A. Livingston, Michael J. Zieky; Educational Testing Services, 1982

- **Assessment Standards** are the criteria adopted for judging actual student achievement relative to curriculum standards. They are ultimately expressed and applied to test scores. They are derived from answers to questions such as: What scores must a student obtain or how many questions on a given test must a student answer correctly in order for his/her performance on the test to be judged as acceptable or excellent?
- **Achievement Standards** are judgements that specify what percentages of students are expected to achieve an acceptable and an excellent level of achievement in relation to each course of studies; i.e., to the relevant curriculum standards. They reflect a community judgement about what is an appropriate expectation for students. It is important to point out that this judgement is not a prediction of the percentage of students who will actually achieve acceptable or excellent levels, but rather a specification of the percentage of students at a given grade or year in school who are *expected* to achieve the acceptable (85%) or excellent level (15%). **The 85% of students expected to meet the acceptable standard includes those students who meet the standard of excellence.** These standards apply to school, jurisdiction, and provincial performance.
- **Local targets** are goals set in schools/districts to focus plans for helping students learn what is expected by the provincial government. These local targets reflect the specific needs of students, the views of teachers, school administration, and the local community, and the resources available to provide learning opportunities for students.

Confirming Standards

Confirming standards is a process whereby judgements about students' performance on the assessment are made in relation to provincial standards. For more information on the confirming standards process, refer to Appendix A of the *Achievement Testing Program Provincial Report, June 1993 Administration*. For information on the selection of teachers for participation in the confirming standards process, refer to the current *General Information Bulletin, Achievement Testing Program*.

Purpose of Assessment Standards

The provincial standards are the basis upon which we assess how well students have learned English Language Arts by the end of Grade 6. These standards reflect the essential learnings that all Alberta students are expected to achieve. Provincial standards are useful, therefore, for assessing Grade 6 students in all types of school programs—public, private, and home education. By comparing actual results with provincial standards, decisions can be made about whether achievement is, in fact, “good enough.”

Description of the Language Arts Assessment Standards

The following statements describe what is expected of Grade 6 students who are meeting the *acceptable standard* or the *standard of excellence* on independent work at the end of the Grade 6 Language Arts program. These statements represent the standards against which student achievement will be measured.

Acceptable Standard

Students meeting the *acceptable standard* are able to

- deal with a familiar idea in writing, such as the narration of a personal experience. On occasion, these students can deal with complex and/or original thoughts
- communicate information and ideas for a specific audience
- use words and expressions that convey relevant, general meanings
- organize concrete, factual materials containing straightforward ideas
- recognize increasingly complex techniques of literary structure and organization, such as cause and effect, foreshadowing, and flashback
- read relatively short, simple selections of fiction, non-fiction, prose, and poetry, and to identify the main idea, sequence of events, key details, author's purpose, and imagery used
- use textual clues and prior knowledge to associate the meaning of words and phrases in straightforward text
- consistently answer literal idea, detail, and relationship questions; occasionally understand ideas, details, and relationships that are implied in a reading selection

Standard of Excellence

Students meeting the *standard of excellence* are able to

- deal confidently and competently with writing that requires complex and original thought. They are able to develop and organize abstract, complex material
- consistently establish an appropriate focus for communication and select ideas and language to suit different purposes and audiences
- use words and expressions that convey purposeful, specific meanings
- read and reflect on print and non-print text from many perspectives; analyze and evaluate ideas received from a wide variety of materials
- recognize complex techniques of literary structure and/or organization, and also apply them to their own writing
- deal effectively with abstract and complex details and ideas found in longer, sophisticated selections of fiction, non-fiction, prose, and poetry
- use textual clues and prior knowledge to associate the meaning of words and phrases in complex or unfamiliar text
- readily answer literal as well as implied idea, detail, and relationship questions

Grade 6 English Language Arts Assessment

General Description

The Grade 6 English Language Arts Assessment is composed of two parts.

Part A: Writing consists of two writing assignments designed to be completed in two hours. Included in the total period is time for discussion before the narrative writing, and planning, drafting, and revising of both the narrative and functional writing. Additional time of up to 30 minutes may be provided to allow students to finish.

Part B: Reading (multiple choice) is designed to be completed in 60 minutes. Additional time of up to 30 minutes may be provided to allow students to finish. It consists of 50 multiple-choice questions based on reading selections from fiction, non-fiction, drama, poetry, and visual media.

Part B: Reading has one booklet containing reading passages and questions. Answers are recorded on a separate machine-scorable answer sheet.

Students may use a dictionary and a thesaurus when completing **only Part A: Writing**.

Part A: Writing

Section I of the *Part A: Writing* assignment consists of a picture prompt that students will be asked to respond to in the form of a story. Section I includes a page labelled Planning. Students are asked to produce only one copy of their work. They are encouraged to write on every other line and to make revisions and corrections directly on this copy.

Section II of the *Part A: Writing* assignment requires the students to write for a specific audience and to fulfill a specified purpose

within a given context. Specified purposes may include letters of invitation to guest speakers, requests for information, and congratulatory or thank-you letters. This part of the assignment tests students' writing skills using "real world" situations. The writers' ability to adjust content, order, tone, and diction to the situation is being tested. Section II includes a page labelled Planning and two lined pages for a letter, followed by a blank envelope that is to be addressed properly. Students are encouraged to write on every other line for the main body of the letter.

Important Information to Note!

At the beginning of *Part A: Writing*, students will be given time to discuss both assignments with classmates in groups of two to four, or to think alone about them, and to plan their responses before beginning to write.

In the past, many students have written papers that were "off topic." Students' writing should be related to the prompt. **Students whose writing is unrelated to the prompt for functional writing will be awarded an Insufficient.**

Students may do their writing using a word processor. For information about using word-processing technology to complete the written component of the achievement test, see the draft policy in the *General Information Bulletin, Achievement Testing Program, Grades 3, 6, and 9*.

The mark for writing is worth 50% of the total mark for Language Arts. Section I, narrative/essay is worth approximately 2/3 of the total writing mark and Section II, functional, is worth approximately 1/3 of the total writing mark.

Blueprint for Part A: Section I—Narrative Writing

The blueprint that follows outlines Part A: Writing, Section I, of the Grade 6 English Language Arts Achievement Test. It delineates the categories under which summary data will be reported to school jurisdictions.

Reporting Category	Description of Writing Assignment	Standards
<p>*Content (selecting ideas and details to achieve a purpose)</p> <p>Students select events and/or actions that are plausible and appropriate to their purpose. Students describe characters and setting using details that are appropriate for the context established.</p>	<p>The narrative writing assignment follows a picture and a writing prompt that will be read aloud to students. Students are to respond to the prompt in the form of a story.</p>	<p>Students' achievement in each reporting category will be described according to the following standard statements:</p>
<p>*Organization (organizing ideas and details into a coherent whole)</p> <p>Students organize their writing effectively and coherently to produce a unified composition that achieves their purpose for writing.</p>		<p>Meets the standard of excellence</p>
<p>Sentence Structure (structuring sentences effectively)</p> <p>Students use a variety of sentence types and structures to achieve clarity, interest, and emphasis.</p>		<p>Approaches the standard of excellence</p>
<p>Vocabulary (selecting and using words and expressions correctly and effectively)</p> <p>Students use words and expressions appropriately and effectively to communicate to the specified audience and to achieve their purpose.</p>		<p>Clearly meets the acceptable standard</p>
<p>Conventions (using the conventions of written language correctly and effectively)</p> <p>Students communicate clearly by adhering to appropriate spelling, punctuation, and grammar conventions.</p>		<p>Does not clearly meet the acceptable standard</p>
		<p>Clearly below the acceptable standard</p>
		<p>INS insufficient</p>

*These categories are weighted to be worth twice as much as each of the others.

Blueprint for Part A: Section II—Functional Writing

The blueprint that follows outlines Part A: Writing, Section II, of the Grade 6 English Language Arts Achievement Test. It delineates the categories under which summary data will be reported to school jurisdictions.

Reporting Category	Description of Writing Assignment	Standards
Content (thought and detail) Students consider the audience and establish and develop a purpose, incorporating significant information using complete and appropriate details.	The functional writing assignment requires students to write to a specified audience in the context of a business letter. They are also expected to correctly address a blank envelope.	Students' achievement in each reporting category will be described according to the following standard statements:
Content Management (using the conventions of written language correctly and effectively) Students communicate clearly by adhering to appropriate spelling, punctuation, grammar, and format conventions.		Meets the standard of excellence Approaches the standard of excellence Clearly meets the acceptable standard Does not clearly meet the acceptable standard Clearly below the acceptable standard INS insufficient or off-topic

Content and Content Management are weighted equally.

Marking

Classroom teachers will be able to mark students' writing, using scoring guides like those in this bulletin, before returning materials to Alberta Education.

The total score for a student's writing may be calculated by following the procedure below:

Narrative Writing

1. Assign a score of 1 to 5 for each of *content, organization, sentence structure, vocabulary, and conventions.*
2. Weight *content* and *organization* to be worth twice as much as the other categories by multiplying their scores by 2.

Maximum score possible for Narrative Writing = 35

Functional Writing

1. Assign a score of 1 to 5 for each of *content* and *content management.*
2. Multiply this total by 2.

Maximum score possible for Functional Writing = 20

Total Score

1. Add the narrative and functional scores.

Total score for Part A: Writing

Narrative Writing ___/35 (63.6%) + **Functional Writing** ___/20 (36.4%) = ___/55 (100%)

Samples of students' writing that exemplify the scoring criteria will be provided with the test materials, to support local marking.

Marks awarded locally can be submitted to Alberta Education and used as the first reading of a student's response. The papers will then be marked centrally by Alberta

Education as the second reading. Both marks contribute to the student's final mark. In the case of a discrepancy between these two marks, papers will be adjudicated by a third reading, which will determine the final mark that a paper is awarded.

Papers that are not marked locally by teachers will be marked centrally only once. A small percentage of these papers will be marked a second time for inter-rater reliability.

All papers will be marked centrally in Edmonton in July. The Student Evaluation Branch will contact superintendents in the spring for their recommendations of markers. The approximately 200 Grade 6 teachers selected will reflect proportional representation from the various regions of Alberta. To qualify for recommendation by a superintendent, a prospective marker must be currently teaching Grade 6 Language Arts, have taught it for at least two years, have a permanent Alberta teaching certificate, and be employed by a school jurisdiction at the time of marking. Markers will be contacted in May and the list of markers will be finalized no later than June 15. Group leaders will meet for one day before the marking session.

Each year, we have many more teachers nominated to mark than we have spots for marking. We must make sure that we have a balance of markers reflecting the student populations in various parts of the province. As well, we keep a balance of representation of males and females, and of experienced and inexperienced markers. Unfortunately, not everyone whose name is submitted is selected.

The time allotted for marking is condensed, hence markers are often asked to mark on Saturday and Sunday. The marking floor is open from 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M., and markers are expected to be available to mark during those hours.

Practice Writing Assignments

The practice assignments that follow are similar in format and content to the assignments on the 1998 Grade 6 English Language Arts *Part A: Writing* component. They appeared on the 1997 Achievement Test. They are no longer secured and may be used for practice with your students. Adequate space for planning and writing both sections will be provided in the writing booklet.

Grade 6 Achievement Test

English Language Arts

Part A: Writing

To The Teacher

Read this page and pages 15, 16, and 22 to your students.

Description

- This test consists of **two** sections.
- Before you write, you will have 10 minutes in total for discussion about the prompts in Section I and Section II.
- In **Section I**, on pages 15 and 16, there is a writing prompt and a picture for you to write about.
- We suggest that you take about 70 minutes to complete Section I.
- When you have finished Section I, go on to Section II.
- **Section II**, on page 22, describes a situation that you must respond to in letter format.
- We suggest that you take approximately 40 minutes to write the letter.

You have 2 hours to complete this test.
You may take up to 30 additional minutes to complete the test, if you need it.

Instructions

- Before beginning to write, you will have 10 minutes to talk with your classmates (in groups of two to four) about the writing assignments, or to think about them alone.
- Jot down your ideas and/or make a plan before you write. Do this on the **Planning** pages.
- You may use pencil, or blue or black ink to do your writing.
- Write on the lined pages provided. Write on every second line so that it will be easier to make changes to your work.
- You are to do only **one copy** of your writing. Remember that you may make changes and corrections directly on this writing.
- You may use the following references:
 - a print or electronic dictionary (English language and/or translation)
 - a thesaurus
- Your narrative writing (Section I) will be evaluated on **what** you say and **how well** you say it (on **Content, Organization, Sentence Structure, Vocabulary, and Conventions**).
- Your functional writing (Section II) will be evaluated on **what** you say and **how well** you say it (on **Content and Content Management**).

Imagine . . .

An old man was sitting among the broken timbers, smoking a pipe.
He seemed to be reading my mind when he said, “Odd, isn’t it?”

“Yes,” I answered. “How did it get here?”



Chris Van Allsburg

Assignment

Use your imagination to write a story that the picture and sentences on page 15 have helped you think about. These sentences do not have to be used in your story.

When writing your story, **be sure to**

- **budget** your time
- **consider** your audience
- **focus** on your purpose
- **use** interesting and descriptive vocabulary
- **organize** your thoughts appropriately in sentences and paragraphs
- **proofread** and correct your work directly on your writing

Content

Focus

When marking **CONTENT** appropriate for Grade 6 narrative writing, the marker should consider how effectively the writer

- establishes a context
- uses events and/or actions that are appropriate for the established context
- uses specific details (of characters, setting, actions, events, etc.)
- demonstrates an awareness of audience

Meets the Standard of Excellence 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The context is clearly established and sustained. • The events and/or actions are consistently appropriate for the established context. • Supporting details are specific and consistently effective. • The writing captivates and holds the reader's interest and is creative and/or original.
Approaches the Standard of Excellence 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The context is clearly established and generally sustained. • The events and/or actions are appropriate for the established context. • Supporting details are specific and generally effective. • The writing engages and generally holds the reader's interest.
Clearly Meets the Acceptable Standard 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The context is established but may not be sustained. • The majority of the events and/or actions are appropriate for the established context. • Supporting details are appropriate, general, and may be predictable. • The writing generally holds the reader's interest.
Does Not Clearly Meet the Acceptable Standard 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The context is vaguely established and may not be sustained. • Some of the events and/or actions are appropriate for the established context. • Supporting details are few and/or may be repetitive. • The writing does not hold the reader's interest.
Clearly Below the Acceptable Standard 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The context may be unclear and/or not sustained. • There are few events and/or actions. • Supporting details are scant. • The writing is confusing and/or frustrating for the reader.
INS INSUFFICIENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student has written so little that it is not possible to assess the content.

Note: Content and Organization are weighted to be worth twice as much as the other categories.

Organization

Focus

When marking **ORGANIZATION** appropriate for Grade 6 narrative writing, the marker should consider how effectively the writer

- introduces the topic/subject
- follows a coherent order
- establishes connections and/or relationships between events, actions, details, and/or characters
- brings closure to the writing

Meets the Standard of Excellence <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">5</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction is purposeful, interesting, and clearly establishes events, characters, and/or setting, and provides direction for the writing. • Events and/or details are arranged in paragraphs in a purposeful and effective order, and coherence is maintained. • Connections and/or relationships between events, actions, details, and/or characters are consistently maintained. • The ending ties events and/or actions together.
Approaches the Standard of Excellence <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">4</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction clearly establishes events, characters, and/or setting, and provides direction for the writing. • Events and/or details are arranged in paragraphs, in a purposeful order, and coherence is generally maintained. • Connections and/or relationships between events, actions, details, and/or characters are maintained. • The ending provides an appropriate finish for events and/or actions.
Clearly Meets the Acceptable Standard <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">3</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction directly presents information about events, characters, and/or setting. • Events and/or details are arranged in a discernible order, although coherence may falter occasionally. • Connections and/or relationships between events, actions, details, and/or characters are generally maintained. • The ending is predictable and/or contrived, but is connected to events and/or actions.
Does Not Clearly Meet the Acceptable Standard <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">2</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction provides little information. • The arrangement of events and/or details is not clearly discernible, and coherence falters frequently. • Connections and/or relationships between events, actions, details, and/or characters are unclear and/or inconsistent or missing. • The ending is predictable and/or contrived, and may not be connected to events and/or actions.
Clearly Below the Acceptable Standard <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">1</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction may be confusing. • The arrangement of events and/or details is haphazard and incoherent. • Connections and/or relationships between events, actions, details, and/or characters are missing. • The ending, if present, is unconnected to the events and/or actions.
INS INSUFFICIENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing has been awarded an INS for Content.

Note: Content and Organization are weighted to be worth twice as much as the other categories.

Sentence Structure

Focus

When marking **SENTENCE STRUCTURE** appropriate for Grade 6 narrative writing, the marker should consider the

- writer's control of sentence structure
- effectiveness and variety of sentence type and length
- variety of sentence beginnings

Meets the Standard of Excellence <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">5</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence structure is effectively and consistently controlled. • Sentence type and length are consistently effective and varied. • Sentence beginnings are varied.
Approaches the Standard of Excellence <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">4</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence structure is controlled. • Sentence type and length are usually effective and varied. • Sentence beginnings are often varied.
Clearly Meets the Acceptable Standard <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">3</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence structure is generally controlled, and may occasionally impede the meaning. • Sentence type and length are sometimes effective and/or varied. • Some variety of sentence beginnings is evident.
Does Not Clearly Meet the Acceptable Standard <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">2</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence structure sometimes lacks control, and this can impede the meaning. • There is little variation of sentence type and length. • There is little variety of sentence beginnings.
Clearly Below the Acceptable Standard <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">1</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence structure generally lacks control, and this severely impedes the meaning. • There is no variation of sentence type or length. • There is no variety of sentence beginnings.
INS INSUFFICIENT	• The writing has been awarded an INS for Content .

Vocabulary

Focus

When marking **VOCABULARY** appropriate for Grade 6 narrative writing, the marker should consider the extent to which the writer uses

- words and expressions accurately and effectively
- specific words and expressions

Meets the Standard of Excellence <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">5</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and expressions are used accurately and effectively. • Specific words and expressions are used to create vivid images and/or to enrich details.
Approaches the Standard of Excellence <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">4</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and expressions are used accurately and often effectively. • Specific words and expressions are frequently used to create images and/or to add clarity to details.
Clearly Meets the Acceptable Standard <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">3</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and expressions are generally used appropriately. • General words and expressions are sometimes used where specific words and expressions would have been more effective.
Does Not Clearly Meet the Acceptable Standard <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">2</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and expressions are sometimes used appropriately. • General, rather than specific words, predominate. Specific words, if present, are frequently misused.
Clearly Below the Acceptable Standard <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">1</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General words that convey only vague meanings are used.
INS INSUFFICIENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing has been awarded an INS for Content.

Conventions

Focus

When marking **CONVENTIONS** appropriate for Grade 6 narrative writing, the marker should consider the extent to which the writer has control of

- mechanics (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, indenting for new speakers, etc.) and usage (agreement of subject–verb, agreement of pronoun–antecedent, etc)
- clarity and flow of the communication

Proportion of error to length and complexity of response must be considered.

Meets the Standard of Excellence 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of the writing is enhanced because it is essentially error free. • Errors, if present, do not reduce the clarity or interrupt the flow of the communication.
Approaches the Standard of Excellence 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of the writing is sustained because it contains only minor convention errors. • Errors that are present do not reduce the clarity or interrupt the flow of the communication.
Clearly Meets the Acceptable Standard 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of the writing is maintained through generally correct use of conventions. • Errors that are present rarely reduce the clarity or interrupt the flow of the communication.
Does Not Clearly Meet the Acceptable Standard 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of the writing is weakened by the frequently incorrect use of conventions. • Errors often reduce the clarity and interrupt the flow of the communication.
Clearly Below the Acceptable Standard 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of the writing is limited by the consistently incorrect use of conventions. • Errors severely reduce the clarity and interrupt the flow of the communication.
INS INSUFFICIENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing has been awarded an INS for Content.

Practice Writing Assignment—Functional Writing (Suggested time—40 minutes)

Read the information below and complete the writing assignment that follows.

The Situation

Pretend that your name is Kelly Brown and that you are a student at Westcrest Elementary School. Your class has been reading books by author/illustrator Chris Van Allsburg. The picture and writing prompt in Section I are from his book *The Wreck of the Zephyr*. Some other books that he has written and illustrated are *Jumanji*, *Polar Express*, *Ben's Dream*, and *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*.

Assignment

Write a letter to Mr. Van Allsburg inviting him to be a guest speaker at your school during Reading Week (June 16 to 20).

Among other details, **be sure to**

- **explain** why you want Mr. Van Allsburg to visit your school
- **include** information that will be helpful to Mr. Van Allsburg
- **ask** for a response to your letter
- **sign** your letter Kelly Brown: **do not use your own name**

Note: Remember to use a business letter format. Address the envelope outline on page 23, using the information below.

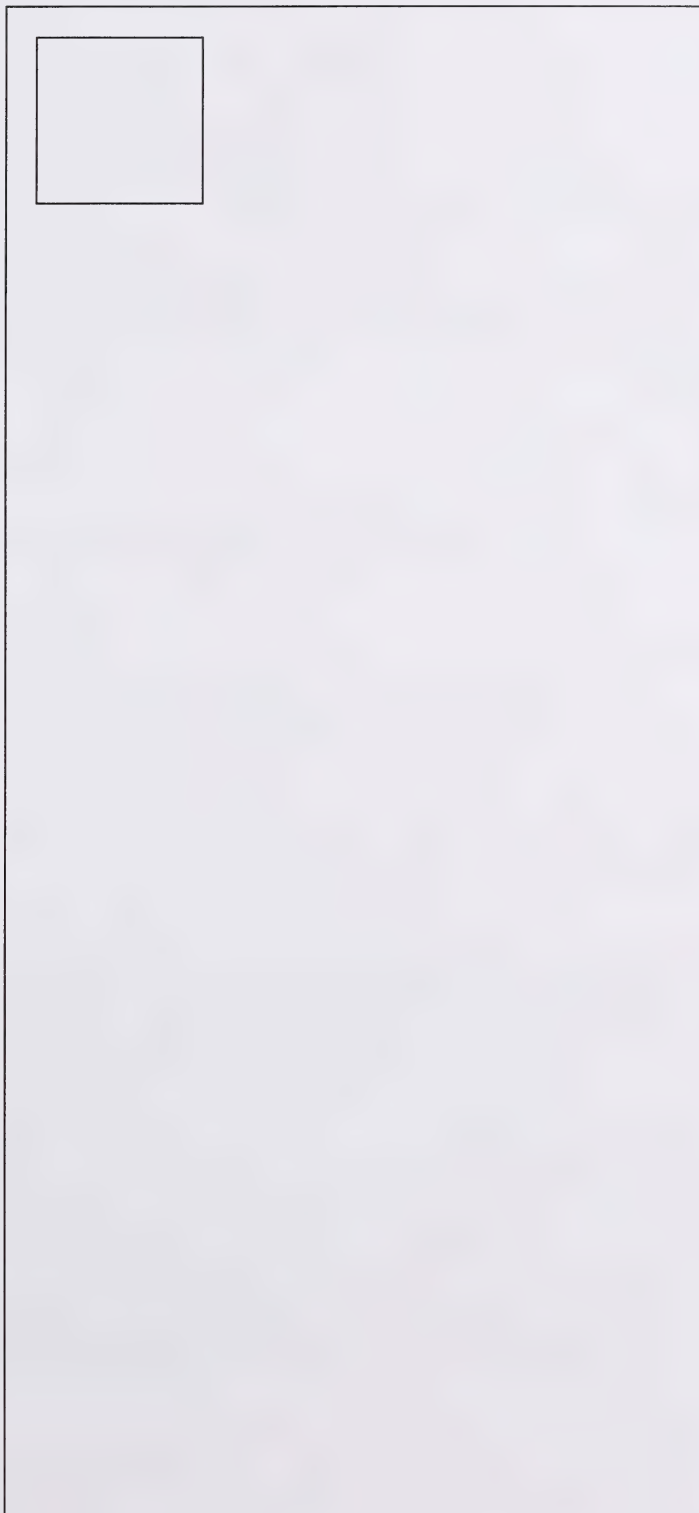
Mr. Van Allsburg

Mr. Van Allsburg can be reached at Houghton Mifflin Canada Ltd., in Markham, Ontario. The street address is 150 Steelcase Road West. The postal code is L3R 3J9.

Westcrest School

Westcrest Elementary School is in Alcan, Alberta. The street address is 914 Superior Avenue. The postal code is T9Z 3B1.

Envelope



Content

Focus

When marking **CONTENT** appropriate for Grade 6 functional writing, the marker should consider

- effectiveness of development and organization of the topic
- how the purpose of the assignment is fulfilled with complete and appropriate information
- appropriateness of tone for a business letter and awareness of audience

Meets the Standard of Excellence 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of topic is clearly focused and effective. • Complete information is presented, and this information is enhanced by precise and appropriate details that effectively fulfill the purpose. • A tone appropriate for the addressee is clearly and effectively maintained.
Approaches the Standard of Excellence 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of topic is generally focused and effective. • Complete information is presented, and this information is substantiated by appropriate details that fulfill the purpose. • A tone appropriate for the addressee is clearly maintained.
Clearly Meets the Acceptable Standard 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of topic is adequate. • Sufficient information is given, and this information is supported by enough detail to fulfill the purpose. • A tone appropriate for the addressee is generally maintained.
Does Not Clearly Meet the Acceptable Standard 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of topic is vaguely focused and ineffective. • Essential information may be missing. Supporting details are scant, insignificant, and/or irrelevant. The purpose is only partially fulfilled. • A tone appropriate for the addressee is evident but not maintained.
Clearly Below the Acceptable Standard 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of topic, if present, is inadequate. • Essential information and supporting details are inappropriate or lacking. The purpose is not fulfilled. • Little awareness of tone appropriate for the addressee is evident.
INS INSUFFICIENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The marker can discern no evidence of an attempt to fulfill the assignment, or the writing is so deficient in length that it is not possible to assess content.

Note: Content and Content Management are equally weighted.

Please advise students that their work must be related to the assignment. Those letters that are completely “off topic” will be awarded an Insufficient.

Content Management

Focus

When marking **CONTENT MANAGEMENT** appropriate for Grade 6 functional writing, the marker should consider

- accuracy and effectiveness of words and expressions
- control of sentence structures, usage, and mechanics (spelling, punctuation, etc.)
- consistent application of format for business letter and envelope

Proportion of error to length and complexity of response must be considered.

Meets the Standard of Excellence <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">5</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and expressions used are consistently accurate and effective. • The writing demonstrates confident and consistent control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. • The letter and envelope are essentially free from format errors and/or omissions.
Approaches the Standard of Excellence <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">4</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and expressions used are usually accurate and effective. • The writing demonstrates competent and generally consistent control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. • The letter and envelope contain few format errors and/or omissions.
Clearly Meets the Acceptable Standard <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">3</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and expressions used are generally accurate and occasionally effective. • The writing demonstrates basic control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. Errors may occasionally impede meaning. • The letter and envelope contain occasional format errors and/or omissions.
Does Not Clearly Meet the Acceptable Standard <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">2</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and expressions used are frequently inappropriate and/or misused. • The writing demonstrates faltering control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. Errors impede meaning. • The letter and envelope contain frequent format errors and/or omissions.
Clearly Below the Acceptable Standard <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">1</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and expressions used are inaccurate and/or misused. • The writing demonstrates lack of control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. Errors severely impede meaning. • The letter and envelope contain numerous and glaring format errors and/or omissions.
INS INSUFFICIENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing has been awarded an INS for Content.

Part B: Reading

Part B: Reading of the Grade 6 English Language Arts Achievement Test requires students to read selections that include a variety of informational and narrative/poetic texts with implicit ideas and details. The content of these selections is sometimes abstract and may be specialized. After reading these selections, students answer 50 multiple-choice questions based on the readings.

The sample selections and questions on pages 28 to 35 appeared on the June 1997 Achievement Test (all other questions on this test are secured). These released questions, along with questions from previous bulletins, can be used to prepare students for the current achievement test.

These questions illustrate the nature and complexity of those that will appear on the 1998 test, although the emphasis will be different. The blueprint for Part B of the achievement test, showing the approximate number of questions in each reporting category, appears on the next page.

Development

Reading selections are chosen according to the following general guidelines.

- Reading selections, whenever possible, should be relatively short but should be complete works containing a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- Reading selections should reflect the interests of the majority of Grade 6 students.
- Reading selections should be of appropriate difficulty for Grade 6 students.
- Canadian content should be used extensively.

The following considerations guided question development.

- Questions relating to each reading selection are arranged from specific to general, wherever practical.
- Questions should test the student's ability to understand and analyze the reading selections and to make judgements about their form and content. Only questions dealing with significant aspects of the reading selections should be asked.

Reading Blueprint

The blueprint for *Part B: Reading* shows the reporting categories and language function under which questions are classified. The number of questions in each category is approximate.

Part B: Reading Grade 6 Language Arts Achievement Test, June 1998

Reporting Category	Question Distribution by Language Function		Number of Questions	Percent of Test
	Informational	Narrative/Poetic		
Main Ideas/Details The student should be able to recognize explicit and inferred or implicit relationships among settings, events, characters, and ideas, and identify growth or change in fictional characters.	6	10	16	32
Organization of Ideas and Relationships between Form and Content The student should be able to identify genre and elements of story structure, recognize the author's techniques, determine the author's purpose, and use text and typographical features to assist reading.	5	6	11	22
Associating Meaning The student should be able to associate meanings of words and expressions from prior knowledge and contextual clues, understand the denotations and connotations of words and expressions, and determine the meaning and effect of the more common types of figurative language.	3	6	9	18
Synthesizing Ideas The student should be able to draw conclusions, make generalizations, and/or predict plausible outcomes by synthesizing information from the entire reading selection.	5	9	14	28
Total Number of Questions	19	31	50	100
Percent of Test	38	62	100	100

Practice Reading Questions

I. Read the information below and answer questions 1 to 5.

NEW FUN WITH OLD GAMES



Chien-tze ("jee-en-dzuh")

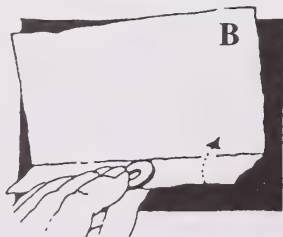
Kick a small weight up into the air over and over again and you're playing an old game that's been played in many parts of the world. Chinese children in Taiwan used to kick *chien-tze* birdies made from paper and a coin with a hole in the middle. Polish children kicked *Zoshka* or *Sophie*, a little lead weight with a pompom of wool. So did Korean children; they called it jay-gee. In North America, Native children filled small buckskin balls with sand, pebbles, or seeds. Maybe you play Hacky Sack with a beanbag. Here's how to make a *chien-tze* style birdie yourself.

You'll need:

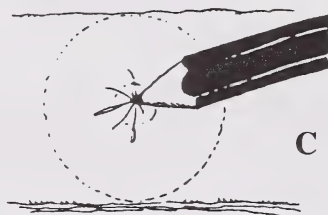
- a metal washer about 2.5 cm (1 inch) across
- tissue paper
- a sharp pencil

1. Cut a rectangle of tissue paper about 15 cm by 22 cm (6 inches by 8½ inches).

2. Put the washer in the middle of one long edge of the paper. Fold the paper and the washer over and over smoothly and tightly.

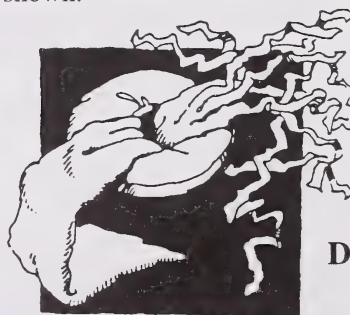


3. Use the pencil point very gently to poke a hole through the paper in the middle of the washer.



4. Feed the ends of the paper through the centre of the washer.

5. Trim the ends of the strips so they're both about 7 cm (3 inches) long and open them up a bit. Rip them into narrow strips as shown.



6. Drop your birdie onto your foot as shown. See how many times you can kick it up without dropping it. This may seem impossible at first but don't give up.

Katherine Grier

1. “Jee-en-dzuh” appears in brackets after the word chien-tze to show its
 - A. word origin
 - B. alternate spelling
 - C. meaning
 - D. pronunciation

2. Which step in the instructions **best** matches illustration A?
 - A. Step 2
 - B. Step 3
 - C. Step 5
 - D. Step 6

3. The word “feed” in Step 4 means
 - A. push
 - B. join
 - C. set
 - D. trim

4. Which of the following is the correct order in constructing a chien-tze?
 - A. Cut, poke, fold, feed, trim
 - B. Fold, poke, cut, trim, feed
 - C. Cut, fold, poke, feed, trim
 - D. Feed, cut, poke, trim, fold

5. The **main** purpose of the illustrations is to
 - A. entertain the reader
 - B. make the directions clear
 - C. persuade the reader
 - D. make the text appealing

II. Read the poem below and answer questions 6 to 9.

SNOWFLAKES

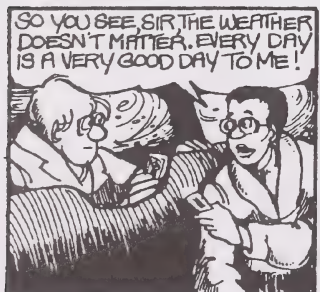
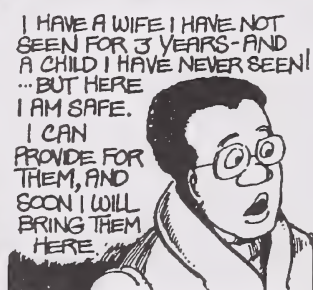
- And did you know
That every flake of snow
That forms so high
In the grey winter sky
5 And falls so far,
Is a bright six-pointed star?
Each crystal grows
A flower as perfect as a rose.
Lace could never make
10 The patterns of a flake.
No brooch
Of figured silver could approach
Its delicate craftsmanship. And think
Each pattern is distinct.
15 Of all the snowflakes floating there—
The million million in the air—
None is the same. Each star
is newly forged, as faces are,
Shaped to its own design
20 Like yours and mine.
And yet . . . each one
Melts when its flight is done;
Holds frozen loveliness
A moment, even less;
25 Suspends itself in time—
And passes like a rhyme.

Clive Sansom

6. The word “distinct” (line 14) means
- A. special
 - B. perfect
 - C. delicate
 - D. different
7. In the phrase “Each star is newly forged” (lines 17–18), the word “forged” means
- A. changed
 - B. created
 - C. imitated
 - D. discovered
8. The poet is **mainly** saying that
- A. each snowflake has an interesting shape
 - B. there are millions of snowflakes and people
 - C. nothing compares to the beauty of a snowflake
 - D. snowflakes melt too quickly
9. In the poem, the shape of the snowflake is **mainly** compared to that of a
- A. crystal
 - B. brooch
 - C. star
 - D. rose

III. Examine the cartoon below and answer questions 10 to 12.

FOR BETTER OR WORSE



© 1993 Lynn Johnston/Distributed by Universal Press Syndicate

Lynn Johnston

10. It was a good day for the cab driver because he
- A. makes a lot of money in bad weather
 - B. feels lucky to live in this country
 - C. likes to drive a cab
 - D. does not feel the cold
11. The passenger changed his outlook on the kind of a day it was because
- A. the cab driver came from another country
 - B. he was able to leave the driving to the cab driver
 - C. the cab driver helped him see what is important in life
 - D. he knew that the blizzard outside would soon be over
12. The **main** idea of the cartoon is to learn to
- A. live one day at a time
 - B. look on the bright side of things
 - C. be grateful for what you have
 - D. consider the well-being of others

IV. Read the article below and answer questions 13 to 18.

THE SECRET LIFE OF SEEDS

What do peas, rice, peanuts, corn, beans, wheat, and nuts have in common? Besides the fact that you eat them, they're all seeds. Seeds are more than just a way to grow food: many seeds actually are food themselves! For example, some seeds are used to season food, such as anise, caraway, coriander, dill, pepper, and celery seeds. Others, like corn and peanuts, are squeezed to make oil. Still others make great snacks when roasted—for example, pumpkin and sunflower seeds.

Seeds have talents few people notice. Most seeds (except an impatient few) are able to wait for exactly the right moment before germinating, or beginning to grow. This can mean a wait of one year, ten years, or even 85 years. Seeds found after several thousand years in the tombs of Egyptian pharaohs or kings were still able to germinate!

This talent means that a seed can wait for everything to be just right—water, temperature, light, oxygen—before taking the big plunge and sending out a shoot.

A lot of things can set a seed off sprouting. Most seeds germinate after a dormant, or inactive, period.

Some seeds' growth is triggered by light. Some will grow only after a certain amount of rain. This is helpful in desert areas. Since plants need water to survive, sprouting after a lot of rain at least gives them a good start.

Other seeds, such as those from some water plants, are dormant until freezing and thawing cracks their outer coating or water wears it away. Still others, such as jack pine, germinate only after being exposed to extreme heat. These seeds are the first to sprout after a forest fire, bringing the forest back to life.

A lot of seeds grow only after being exposed to a cold spell. This keeps the plant from sprouting in the summer or fall when it wouldn't have a long enough season to grow.

Without legs, seeds have to be ingenious to get around. Animals and birds often unknowingly help seeds spread. For example, when squirrels store nuts for future meals, they sometimes forget where they bury them, leaving a trail of trees and plants to mark their absent-mindedness. When birds eat berries, they can't digest the seeds and excrete them after flying far away from the original plant.

Some seeds are "hitchhikers." They have small hooks or barbs to attach themselves to any animal—including you—that comes by. They get carried off to other locations and dropped there.

"Parachuters," such as dandelions, and "winged" seeds, such as those from maple trees, are so light that they are blown easily from place to place.

"Shooting" seeds are formed in pods which burst open and fire them out.

from *Foodworks*, An Ontario Science Centre Book

13. Anise, caraway, and coriander seeds are used

- A. to make oil
- B. as seasoning in food
- C. for roasting to make snacks
- D. to decorate food

14. Seeds that are “dormant” (line 15) are those that are

- A. used in cooking
- B. not formed in pods
- C. sprouting new shoots
- D. not yet growing

15. In desert areas, seeds germinate

- A. after a rainfall
- B. after freezing and thawing
- C. when exposed to extreme heat
- D. when exposed to a cold spell

16. The seeds that sprout first after a forest fire are from a

- A. maple
- B. jack pine
- C. poplar
- D. white birch

17. The word “ingenious” (line 26) means

- A. daring
- B. changed
- C. exposed
- D. resourceful

18. The **main** idea of this article is that seeds

- A. germinate in different ways
- B. have special adaptive characteristics
- C. can be dormant for many years
- D. provide for many birds



V. Read the excerpt below and answer questions 19 to 23.

THE VANDARIAN INCIDENT

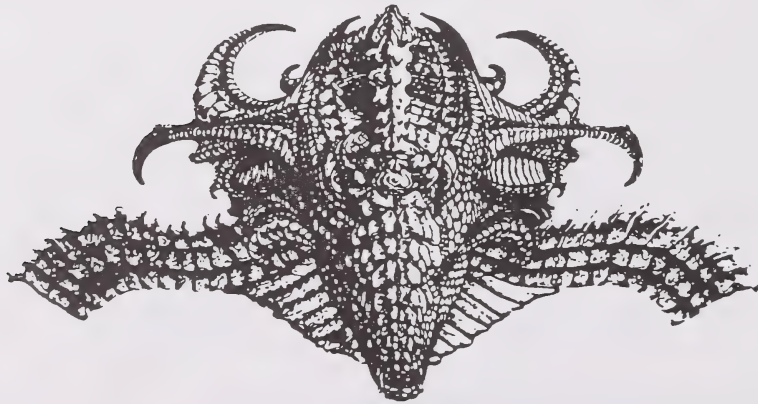
This is Tyler's final test at the space academy. He's been left in an area one hundred kilometres from the base. A sand storm is coming that will kill him if he doesn't find shelter. He must use all of his training and not panic.

The temperature had dropped to thirty-one degrees—still too warm for vigorous exercise, but Tyler had no option. If he didn't reach the crust pits within an hour, the storm would blow him to pieces. He kept on jogging. There was no time now to think of conserving moisture—it was sweat or die.

5 The wind had picked up steadily. It was blowing from the west, from left to right across Tyler's path. Already small grains of sand peppered his cheeks, stung his eyes, clogged his mouth as he panted for breath. Slowly, he thought, run slowly. Get into rhythm. Under good conditions he could run like that for hours. The idea was to let the body pace itself, to keep something always in reserve.

10 By squinting, Tyler was able to keep most of the sand from his eyes. As the temperature continued to fall, he perspired less and began to feel more comfortable. Then suddenly he found himself on his knees, his eyeballs raked by sand. It was behind his eyelids. It coated his teeth and tongue. It plugged his nostrils. Without warning, the wind had become a gale.

Martyn Godfrey



19. Despite the heat, Tyler continued to jog because
- A. it was “still too warm for vigorous exercise” (lines 1–2)
 - B. “the storm would blow him to pieces” (line 3)
 - C. many “small grains of sand peppered his cheeks” (line 6)
 - D. “he perspired less and began to feel more comfortable” (lines 11–12)
20. According to the description in lines 5 and 6, Tyler was travelling
- A. west
 - B. east
 - C. south
 - D. north
21. Tyler’s greatest danger came from
- A. vigorous exercise
 - B. the crust pits
 - C. violent winds
 - D. the falling temperature
22. This excerpt is set in a
- A. polar region
 - B. tundra environment
 - C. desert
 - D. jungle
23. At the beginning of the excerpt, the mood is one of
- A. urgency
 - B. hopefulness
 - C. excitement
 - D. helplessness

Key and Descriptors for Practice Reading Questions

Item	Key	Language Function	Reporting Category	Curriculum Standard
1	D	Informational	Organization of Ideas	Use text features to assist comprehension in an article
2	D	Information	Organization of ideas	Use text features in conjunction with print to assist comprehension in an article
3	A	Informational	Associating meaning	Recognize word connotations beyond their literal meaning in an article
4	C	Informational	Organization of Ideas	Understand an author's organizational techniques in an article
5	B	Informational	Synthesizing	Draw a conclusion by synthesizing information in an article
6	D	Narrative/poetic	Associating meaning	Infer the meaning of a word from its context in a poem
7	B	Narrative/poetic	Associating meaning	Infer the meaning of a word from its context in a poem
8	C	Narrative/poetic	Synthesizing	Draw a conclusion using prior knowledge and by synthesizing information in a poem
9	C	Narrative/poetic	Synthesizing	Draw a conclusion using prior knowledge and by synthesizing information in a poem
10	B	Narrative/poetic	Organization of ideas	Understand an implied cause/effect relationship in a cartoon
11	C	Narrative/poetic	Synthesizing	Draw a conclusion by synthesizing information in a cartoon
12	C	Narrative/poetic	Synthesizing	Draw a conclusion by synthesizing information in a cartoon
13	B	Informational	Main ideas/details	Locate key details in an article
14	D	Informational	Associating meaning	Infer the meaning of a word from its context in an article
15	A	Informational	Main ideas/details	Locate key details in an article
16	B	Informational	Main ideas/details	Locate key details in an article
17	D	Informational	Associating meaning	Infer the meaning of a word from its context in an article
18	B	Informational	Synthesizing	Draw a conclusion by synthesizing information in an article
19	B	Narrative/poetic	Organization of Ideas	Understand a directly stated cause/effect relationship in a passage
20	D	Narrative/poetic	Synthesizing	Draw a conclusion using prior knowledge and by synthesizing information details in a passage
21	C	Narrative/poetic	Main ideas/details	Make an inference using key details in a passage
22	C	Narrative/poetic	Main ideas/details	Make an inference using key details in a passage
23	A	Narrative/poetic	Main ideas/details	Understand an implicit relationship amongst details in a passage

Preparing Students for the Test

The best way to prepare students for the achievement tests is to teach the curriculum well and to ensure that students know what is expected. Many of the skills and attitudes that support test writing are in fact good skills and strategies for approaching all kinds of learning tasks.

Have students do the practice questions included in this bulletin. Then, have students share strategies they used to answer the questions.

Also, familiarize students with the writing scoring guides in this bulletin. With instruction, students may be able to use these guides effectively when evaluating their own writing or that of peers.

In 1989 and 1993, the Student Evaluation Branch published documents entitled *Samples of Students' Writing*. These samples came from the student responses given on the 1988 and 1992 Language Arts Achievement Tests. Share these samples and the accompanying commentaries with students.

Teachers are also encouraged to share the following information with their students to help them prepare for the Grade 6 English Language Arts Achievement Test.

Part A: Writing

Have students:

Plan their available time carefully. We suggest that they use all the time available to them to carefully *read* the assignment and *think* about what they are being asked to do, to *plan* their writing so that it is focused, unified, and coherent, and to *proofread* their writing. They will have two hours to complete the assignments.

Read all the instructions carefully and do what the assignments ask them to do. The time they spend in reading and thinking about the assignments is time well spent. Many students find that highlighting or underlining key words in the assignments helps them to focus on what is expected.

Plan their writing using the pages provided. They should choose a planning strategy that helps them to focus their ideas. They may want to try

- webbing
- using a chart
- listing (main ideas, character, etc.)
- using a plot outline (diagram)
- using a RAFTS model (role, audience, focus, topic, strong verb)

Use their reference materials. Students are allowed the use of a dictionary and a thesaurus when writing Part A. They should use a dictionary to look up the meanings of words that they want to use but are not completely sure about and to ensure that they spell words correctly. A thesaurus can be useful if students need to find a more precise word for the context they are developing, but they should be careful not to overuse a thesaurus.

Keep in mind the characteristics of effective writing.

- Awareness of audience (appropriateness of tone and use of correct language)
- Completeness of information (enough detail to fulfill purpose)
- Relevance of information (all details pertain to the purpose)
- Clarity of information (all details are specific and easily understood by the reader)

Proofread their work and correct errors directly on their first draft. Students should double-space, to allow them to make corrections more easily.

Part B: Reading

Have students:

Read the material using the strategy that works best for them. They should either

- read the selection and think carefully about it before they try any of the multiple-choice questions associated with the reading selection OR
- read the questions first and then read the selection, keeping in mind the questions they will need to answer

Each set of multiple-choice questions is designed to take them back through the reading selection in a certain way. The questions are ordered according to the location of the answers in the passage. For example, the answer to the first question will likely appear near the beginning of the passage, and so on. Questions relating to the reading selection as a whole will appear at the end of the set of questions.

Consider all forms of information provided. Information will be presented not only in words but also in visual forms such as cartoons, pictures, or charts.

Take the time to reread the lines that are referred to in a question. Many questions contain quotations from the selection with

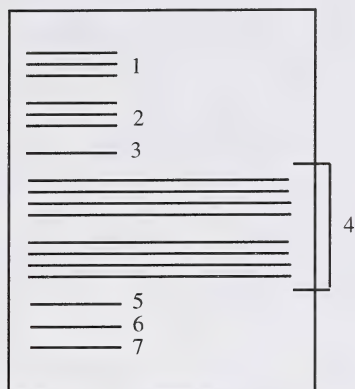
line references indicated. It is always worthwhile to reread the lines that are referenced and consider the meanings of these lines in both their immediate context in the selection and the context of the selection as a whole.

Read carefully all four alternatives (A, B, C, and D) before choosing the answer that they think is best. Some of the questions are designed to test students' ability to make a judgement. These questions will often include a bold-faced qualifier such as **best**, **most strongly**, or **most clearly** in their stems. All of the alternatives (A, B, C, and D) are, to some degree, correct, but one of the alternatives will be "best" in that it takes more of the reading selection into account or can be supported most strongly by reference to the reading selection.

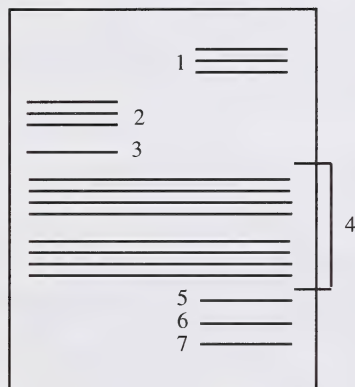
Work from partial knowledge when it is appropriate to do so. If a correct or best answer does not become obvious fairly quickly, students may want to eliminate the answers that seem least appropriate and then use their judgement to select an answer from those that remain.

For further suggestions, see *Teaching Students with Learning Disabilities*, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, pages LD122 to 124.

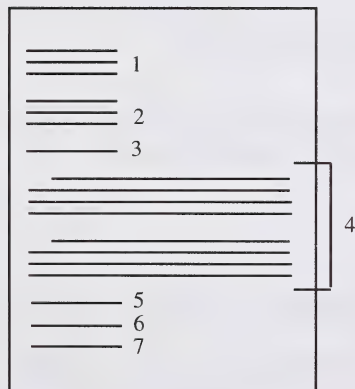
Three Business Letter Formats



The block format. In this format, all parts of the letter run along the left side of the page (margin). No paragraphs in the body are indented.



The modified block format. In this format, the heading and the closing and signature run along the right margin. All the other parts run along the left margin.



The semi-block format. This format is the same as the block format, except that the paragraphs in the body are indented.

Format of a Business Letter

There are three basic business letter formats. Any of these formats is appropriate and acceptable for the test. What is most important is that students choose one format and use it consistently, so that the overall appearance of the letter is attractive.

Note: Students are asked to double-space their work, so that it is easier to make changes. This should only be applied to the body of the letter and not to the other parts.

Parts of the Business Letter (see previous page)

1. Heading

The heading consists of your address and the date.

501 Spring Street
Regina SK R3T 4N7
January 3, 1997

2. Inside Address

The inside address consists of the name and address of the person to whom you are writing. It usually appears four lines below the heading if a word processor is used, or one line below if it is hand-written.

Sam Hunt, Director
The Knitting Mill
1409 3 Avenue
Toronto ON L3V 7O1

3. Salutation

The most traditional salutation or greeting for a business letter is *Dear* followed by Mr., Ms., Mrs., or Miss and the person's last name, and ending with a colon.

Dear Mr. Smith:
Dear Ms. Black:
Dear Mrs. Brown:
Dear Miss Green:

4. Body

The body is the main part of the letter in which you write what you have to say to the person. Skip one line after the salutation.

- Be concise. Ensure that sufficient information is given so that your purpose is clearly understood and your request well received.
- Business letters are usually formal, so the language that you use should also be formal.

5. Closing

The closing is the ending to your letter. It appears at the bottom of the letter, directly under the body. Only the first word in the closing should be capitalized. It is always followed by a comma.

Yours truly,
Sincerely,

6. Signature

The signature is your full name signed. Your signature should appear directly below the closing. It should always be written in ink.

7. Your name printed

8. Commonly Used Abbreviations for Provinces and Territories

Province	Symbol
Alberta	AB
British Columbia	BC
Manitoba	MB
New Brunswick	NB
Newfoundland	NF
Northwest Territories	NT
Nova Scotia	NS
Ontario	ON
Prince Edward Island	PE
Quebec	QC or PQ
Saskatchewan	SK
Yukon	YT

Addressing an Envelope

The diagram shows a rectangular envelope with a horizontal line across the top. Below this line, on the left side, are three horizontal lines for the return address, with a circled number 1 next to them. On the right side, there are four horizontal lines for the mailing address, with a circled number 2 next to them.

1. Return Address

The return address is the name and address of the person sending the letter. The return address appears in the top left corner of the envelope and consists of your name, street address, city or town, province, and postal code.

JEAN BROWN
13 SPRING RD
TORONTO ON L2R 3V6

2. Mailing Address

The mailing address is the name and address to which the letter is being sent. It always appears in the centre of the envelope. For a business letter, the address on the envelope is the same as the inside address of the letter, except all in upper case. There may be separate lines for the title of the addressee (Editor, Director, President), the division or department the person works in, and the name of his or her company, business, or organization.

SAM HUNT
DIRECTOR
THE KNITTING MILL
1403 3 AVE
TORONTO ON L3V 7O1

The following points are taken from the *Canadian Addressing Standards* document:

1. Addresses should be typed or written in upper case or block letters.
2. All lines of the address must be formatted with a uniform left margin.
3. Punctuation marks (commas, periods, etc.) should not be used unless they are part of a place name (e.g., ST. JOHN'S).
4. The postal code should always appear on the same line as the municipality and province name and should be separated from the province by two spaces.
5. The two-letter symbol for the province name should be used wherever possible (see previous page).
6. The return address should be formatted in the same way as the main address.

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